

THANNE most thou graunten, quod she, by semblable resoun, that oon and good be oo same thing. for of thinges, of whiche that the effect nis nat naturelly diverse, nedes the substance mot be oo same thing. I ne may nat denye that, quod I.

AST thou nat knowen wel, quod she, that al thing that is hath so longe his dwellinge & his substance as longe as it is oon; but whan it forleteth to ben oon, it mot nedes dyen and corumpe to-gider? In which manere? quod I.

RIGHT as in bestes, quod she, whan the sowle and the body ben con-joined in oon and dwellen togider, it is cleped a beest. And whan hir unitee is destroyed by the disseverance of that oon from that other, than sheweth it wel that it is ad thing, & that it nis no longer no beest. And the body of a wight, whyl it dwelleth in oo forme by conjuncioun of membres, it is wel seyn that it is a figure of mankinde. And yif the parties of the body ben so deydyd and dissevered, that oon fro that other, that they destroyed unitee, the body forleteth to ben that it was biforn. And, whoso wolde renne in the same manere by alle thinges, he sholde seen that, withoute doute, every thing is in his substance as longe as it is oon; and whan it forleteth to ben oon, it dyeth and perisseth. Whan I considere, quod I, manye thinges, I see non other.

IS ther anything thanne, quod she, that, in as moche as it liveth naturelly, that forleteth the talent or ap-petyt of his beinge, and desireth to come to deeth and to corupeioun? Yif I considere, quod I, the beestes that han any maner nature of wilninge and of nillinge, I ne finde no beest, but yif it be constrained fro withoute forth, that forleteth or despyseth the entencioun to liven and to duren, or that wole, his thanks, hasten him to dyen. for every beest travaileth him to deffende and kepe the savacioun of his lyf, and eschue the deeth and destruccioun. But certes, I doute me of herbes and of trees, that is to seyn, that I am in a doute of swiche thinges as herbes or trees, that ne han no felinge sowles, ne no naturel wirkinges servinge to appetites as bestes han, whether they han appetyt to dwellen and to duren.

CERTES, quod she, ne therof thar the nat doute. Now loke upon thise herbes and thise trees; they wexen first in swiche places as ben covenable to hem, in whiche places they ne mowen nat sone dyen ne dryen, as longe as hir nature may deffenden hem. for som of hem waxen in feeldes, and som in mountaignes, and

othre waxen in mareys, and othre cleven on roches, and somme waxen plentivous in sondes; & yif that any wight enforce him to beren hem into othre places, they wexen drye. for nature yeveth to every thing that is convenient to him, and travaileth that they ne dye nat, as longe as they han power to dwellen & to liven. What woltow seyn of this, that they drawen alle hir norissinges by hir rotes, right as they hadden hir mouthes yplounged within the erthes, and sheden by hir maryes hir wode and hir bark? And what woltow seyn of this, that thilke thing that is right softe, as the marye is, that is alwey hid in the sete, al withinne, and that is defended fro withoute by the stedefastnesse of wode? and that the uttereste bark is put ayeins the destemperance of the bevene, as a defendour mighty to suffren harm? And thus, certes, maystow wel seen how greet is the dilgence of nature; for alle thinges renovelen and puplissen hem with seed ymultiplied; ne ther nis no man that ne wot wel that they ne ben right as a foundement and edifice, for to duren nat only for a tyme, but right as for to duren perdurably by generacioun. And the thinges ech that men wenen ne haven none sowles, ne desire they nat ech of hem by semblable resoun to kepen that is hir, that is to seyn, that is acordinge to hir nature in conserva-cioun of hir beinge & enduringe? for wher for elles bereth lightnesse the flambes up, and the weighte presseth the erthe adoun, but for as moche as thilke places and thilke moevings ben covenable to everich of hem? And forsothe every thing kepeth thilke that is acordinge & propre to him, right as thinges that ben contraries and enemys corumpen hem. And yif the harde thinges, as stones, clyven & holden hir parties togider right faste and hard, and deffenden hem in withstandinge that they ne departe nat lightly atwinne. And the thinges that ben softe and fleting, as is water and eyr, they departen lightly, and yeven place to hem that breken or deyden hem; but natheles, they retomen some ayein into the same thinges fro whennes they ben arraced. But fyr fleeth & refuseth al devisioun. Ne I ne trete nat heer now of wilful moevings of the sowle that is knowinge, but of the naturel entencioun of thinges, as thus: right as we swolve the mete that we receive and ne thinke nat on it, and as we drawen our breeth in slepinge that we wite it nat whyle we slepen. for certes, in the beestes, the love of hir livinges ne of hir beinges ne comth nat of the wilninges of the sowle, but of the biggininges of nature. for certes, thorough con-streininge causes, wil desireth & embrac-

eth ful ofte tyme the deeth that nature dredeth; that is to seyn as thus: that a man may ben constreyned so, by som cause, that his wil desireth and taketh the deeth which that nature hateth & dredeth ful sore. And somtyme we seeth the contrarye, as thus: that the wil of a wight desireth & constreyneth that that nature dredeth & requereth alwey, that is to seyn, the werk of generacioun, by the whiche the generacioun only dwelleth and is sustened the long durabletee of mortal thinges.

NO thus this charitee and this love, that every thing hath to himself, ne comth nat of the moevinge of the sowle, but of the entencioun of nature. for the purviante of God hath yeven to thinges that ben creat of him this, that is a ful gret cause to liven and to duren; for which they desiren naturelly hir lyf as longe as ever they mowen. for which thou mayst nat drede, by no manere, that they ne requeren that ben anywhere, that alle the thinges naturelly the ferme stablesse of perdurable dwellinge, and eek the eschuinge of destruccioun. **Bocce.** Now confesse I wel, quod I, that I see now wel certainly, withoute doutes, the thinges that whylom semeden uncertain to me.

ACC, quod she, thilke thing that desireth to be and to dwellen perdurably, he desireth to ben oon; for yif that that oon were destroyed, certes, beinge ne shulde ther non dwellen to no wight. That is sooth, quod I. Thanne, quod she, desiren alle thinges oon? I as-sente, quod I. And I have shewed, quod she, that thilke same oon is thilke that is good. Ye, for sothe, quod I.

ALL thinges thanne, quod she, requeren good; & thilke good thanne mayst thou descryven right thus: good is thilke thing that every wight de-sireth.

HER ne may be thought, quod I, no more verray thing. for either alle thinges ben referred & brought to nougt, & floteren withoute governour, despoiled of oon as of hir propre heved; or elles, yif ther be any thing to which that alle thinges tenden and hyen, that thing moste ben the sovereing good of alle goodes.

THANNE seyde she thus: O mynory, quod she, I have gret gladnesse of thee; for thou hast fished in thyn herte the middel soothfastnesse, that is to seyn, the prikke; but this thing hath ben discovered to thee, in that thou seydest that thou wistest nat a litel herbiforn. What was that? quod I.

HAT thou ne wistest nat, quod she, which was the ende of thinges; and certes, that is the thing that every

wight desireth; and for as mochel as we han gadered and comprehended that good is thilke thing that is desired of alle, thanne moten we nedes confessen, that good is the fyn of alle thinges.

Metre XI.

Quisquis profunda mente vestigat verum.

HOSO that seketh sooth by a deep thought, and coveteth nat to ben deceived by no misweyes, lat him rollen and trenden withinne himself the light of his inward sighte; & lat him gadere ayein, enclyninge into a compas, the long moevings of his thoughtes; and lat him techen his corage that he hath enclosed and hid in his tresors, al that he compasseth or seketh fro withoute. And thanne thilke thinge, that the blake cloude of errour whylom hadde ycovered, shal lighten more cleerly thanne Phebus himself ne shyneth.

Glosa.

HOSO WOLE seken the deep grounde of sooth in his thought, and wol nat be deceived by false proposiciouns that goon amis fro the trouthe, lat him wel examine and rolle withinne himself the nature and the propretees of the thing; and lat him yit eftsones examine and rollen his thoughtes by good deliberacioun, or that he deme; and lat him techen his sowle that it hath, by natural principles kindeliche yhid within itself, alle the trouthe the whiche he imagineth to ben in thinges withoute. And thanne alle the derknesse of his misknowinge shal seme more evidently to sighte of his understandinge thanne the sonne ne semeth to sighte withoute forth.

OR certes the body, bringinge the weighte of foryetinge, ne hath nat chased out of your thoughte al the cleerresse of your knowinge; for certainly the seed of sooth haldeth & clyveth within your corage, and it is awaked and excyted by the winde & by the blastes of doctrine. for wherfor elles demen ye of your owne wil the rightes, whan ye ben axed, but yif so were that the norissinge of resoun ne livede yplounged in the depthe of your herte? this is to seyn, how sholden men demen the sooth of any thing that were axed, yif ther nere arote of soothfastnesse that were yplounged & hid in naturel principles, the whiche soothfastnesse lived within the deepnesse of the thought. And yif so be that the Muse and the doctrine of Plato singeth sooth, al that every wight lerneth, he ne doth nothing elles thanne but recordeth, as men recorden thinges that ben foryeten.

